

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

The following Listing of Claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

Claim 1 (currently amended): An end cap in combination with a paper tube, the combination comprising:

a paper tube having an inwardly extending flap at an open end; and
an end cap comprising:

a bottom wall having a peripheral edge;
a sidewall extending from the peripheral edge of the bottom wall; and
a channel provided in the sidewall for receiving and engaging the inwardly extending flap;

~~wherein~~ wherein the end cap is adapted to be disposed in within the open end of the paper tube such that it is selectively rotatable between a first position in which the inwardly extending flap is not received and engaged in the channel when at least a part of the end cap is disposed within the open end and a second position in which the inwardly extending flap is received and engaged in the channel.

Claim 2 (original): The combination according to claim 1 wherein the end cap further comprises an annular flange that extends from the sidewall, the flange having an outer diameter that is larger than an inner diameter of the paper tube.

Claim 3 (currently amended): The combination according to claim 1 wherein the bottom wall of the end cap further comprises a projection for facilitating rotation of the ~~end plug cap~~ within the open end of the paper tube.

Claim 4 (currently amended): The combination according to claim 1 wherein:
the paper tube has two opposing inwardly extending flaps at the open end; and

the sidewall of the end cap is provided with two channels for receiving and engaging the two inwardly extending flaps when the end cap is disposed in the open end of the paper tube in the second position.

Claim 5 (currently amended): The combination according to claim 1 wherein: the paper tube has three equally spaced inwardly extending flaps at the open end; and

the sidewall of the end cap is provided with three channels for receiving and engaging the three equally spaced inwardly extending flaps when the end cap is disposed in the open end of the paper tube in the second position.

Claim 6 (currently amended): The combination according to claim 1 wherein: the paper tube has a plurality of inwardly extending flaps at the open end; and the sidewall of the end cap is provided with a plurality of channels for receiving and engaging the plurality of inwardly extending flaps when the end cap is disposed in the open end of the paper tube in the second position.

Claim 7 (original): The combination according to claim 1 wherein at least a portion of the sidewall proximal to the peripheral edge of the bottom wall circumferentially contacts an inner surface of the paper tube when the end cap is disposed in the open end of the paper tube.

Claim 8 (original): A method of closing an open end of a paper tube comprising: forming an inwardly extending flap at the open end of the paper tube; providing an end cap comprising:

- a bottom wall having a peripheral edge;
- a sidewall extending from the peripheral edge of the bottom wall; and
- a channel provided in the sidewall for receiving and engaging the inwardly extending flap;

inserting the end cap bottom wall first into the open end of the paper tube; and

rotating the end cap relative to the paper tube until the inwardly extending flap is received in and engaged by the channel.

Claim 9 (original): The method according to claim 8 wherein the end cap further comprises an annular flange that extends from the sidewall, the flange having an outer diameter that is larger than an inner diameter of the paper tube.

Claim 10 (currently amended): The method according to claim 8 wherein the bottom wall of the end cap further comprises a projection for facilitating rotation of the end-plug cap within the open end of the paper tube.

Claim 11 (original): A method of closing an open end of a paper tube comprising:
providing an end cap comprising:

- a bottom wall having a peripheral edge;
- a sidewall extending from the peripheral edge of the bottom wall, the sidewall including a recessed area or opening for forming an inwardly extending flap at the open end of the paper tube when the end cap is disposed in the open end of the paper tube; and
- a channel provided in the sidewall for receiving and engaging the inwardly extending flap;

inserting the end cap bottom wall first into the open end of the paper tube such that a portion of the sidewall proximal to the peripheral edge of the bottom wall circumferentially contacts an inner surface of the paper tube;
forming the inwardly extending flap; and
rotating the end cap relative to the paper tube until the inwardly extending flap is received in and engaged by the channel.

Claim 12 (original): The method according to claim 11 wherein the end cap further comprises an annular flange that extends from the sidewall, the flange having an outer diameter that is larger than an inner diameter of the paper tube.

Claim 13 (currently amended): The method according to claim 11 wherein the bottom wall of the end cap further comprises a projection for facilitating rotation of the end-plug cap within the open end of the paper tube.

Claim 14 (currently amended): An end cap for closing an open end of a paper tube, the end cap comprising:

a bottom wall having a peripheral edge;

a sidewall extending from the peripheral edge of the bottom wall; and

a channel provided in the sidewall for receiving and engaging an inwardly extending flap at the open end of the paper tube;

~~when~~wherein the end cap is adapted to be ~~disposed in~~ disposed within the open end of the paper tube such that it is selectively rotatable between a first position in which the inwardly extending flap is not received and engaged in the channel when at least a part of the end cap is disposed within the open end and a second position in which the inwardly extending flap is received and engaged in the channel.

Claim 15 (original): The end cap according to claim 14 further comprising an annular flange that extends from the sidewall, the flange having an outer diameter that is larger than an inner diameter of the paper tube.

Claim 16 (original): The end cap according to claim 14 further comprising a skirt that extends from the flange and contacts an outer surface of the paper tube proximal to the open end.

Claim 17 (original): The end cap according to claim 14 wherein at least a portion of the channel has an arcuate contour.

Claim 18 (currently amended): A mailing tube comprising:

a paper tube having a plurality of inwardly extending flaps at a first end of the paper tube; and

a plastic end cap ~~secured~~ releasably securable to the first end of the paper tube,
the end cap comprising:
a bottom wall having a peripheral edge;
a sidewall extending from the peripheral edge of the bottom wall; and
a plurality of channels provided in the sidewall, ~~the channels for~~ receiving
and engaging the plurality of inwardly extending flaps;
wherein the plastic end cap is adapted to be disposed within the open end of the paper tube such that it is selectively rotatable between a first position in which the plurality of inwardly extending flaps are not received and engaged in the plurality of channels when at least a part of the end cap is disposed within the open end and a second position in which the plurality of inwardly extending flaps are received and engaged in the plurality of channels.

Claim 19 (original): The mailing tube according to claim 18 wherein at least a portion of the sidewall proximal to the peripheral edge of the bottom wall circumferentially contacts an inner surface of the paper tube.

Claim 20 (original): The mailing tube according to claim 18 wherein the end cap further comprises an annular flange that extends from the sidewall, the flange having an outer diameter that is larger than an inner diameter of the paper tube.

Claim 21 (canceled)

Claim 22 (currently amended): ~~The combination according to claim 21~~ An end cap in combination with a paper tube, the combination comprising:
a paper tube having an inwardly extending flap at an open end, the inwardly extending flap having an inner side facing an interior portion of the paper tube and an outer side facing away from the interior portion of the paper tube; and
an end cap comprising:
a bottom wall having a peripheral edge; and

a sidewall extending from the peripheral edge of the bottom wall;
wherein the end cap receives and engages both the inner side and the outer side of the
inwardly extending flap when the end cap is disposed in the open end of the
paper tube, and

wherein the end cap is a unitary structure that comprises a hinged wing extending from a top portion of the sidewall that can be moved from a first position where the hinged wing does not contact the inwardly extending flap to a second position where at least a portion of the hinged wing engages and contacts the outer side of the inwardly extending flap.

Claim 23 (canceled)